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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0778
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY 2981
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1434
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2307
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 000026

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: CONCERN ABOUT MAOISTS GROWING AMONG
POLITICAL LEADERS

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

11. (C) In separate meetings on January 3 and 4, Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D) President Sher Bahadur Deuba and Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal told the Ambassador that they were concerned about continuing Maoist violence and intimidation. Both leaders said that the situation for political party workers in the countryside was bad. MK Nepal insisted that elections to the Constituent Assembly needed to be held by June at all costs, but Deuba suggested that if elections were to be free and fair, they might need to be delayed until 2008. Both leaders expressed a distrust for the other parties in the Seven-Party Alliance (SPA) and suggested that the other parties might form alliances with the Maoists. Deuba expressed his opinion that the Interim Constitution was flawed and needed to be changed.

Maoist Atrocities Continue Unabated

12. (C) In a January 3 meeting, CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal told the Ambassador that Maoist intimidation and extortion continued across the country. MK Nepal said that CPN-UML workers in many districts were still afraid to leave the district headquarters for fear of Maoist reprisals against them or their families. MK Nepal recounted that Maoists had told people in one village that ballots in the upcoming elections would not be secret, and that the Maoists would "know who you voted for, and punish you if you vote against us." MK Nepal believed that the Maoists were attempting to make up for their lack of genuine popularity by giving the impression, to great effect, that they still controlled most of the country. MK Nepal also recounted one brutal story about a CPN-UML political leader who was running for a local election in a school management committee. He described how Maoist combatants came to the community and started beating the CPN-UML candidate with sticks and bricks, going so far as to attempt to gouge his eyes out with their fingers, until the CPN-UML candidate agreed not to stand for election against them. MK Nepal warned that Maoist intolerance and violence might continue for years to come,

even if the Maoists moved slowly into the political mainstream.

13. (C) In a meeting on January 4, NC-D President Sher Bahadur Deuba told the Ambassador that in most parts of the country the Maoists had not allowed NC-D political workers to travel outside the district headquarters. Deuba also complained that people who had been displaced by the conflict had still not been able to return to their homes. Deuba worried that security in the countryside was declining daily, and that the Government of Nepal (GON) had not yet given orders to the Nepal Police to enforce law and order. He said that the police did not feel like they could take any action because of a lack of political support; they believed the political leadership would blame them for hurting the peace process rather than supporting them for doing their jobs, if they acted to control crime.

Free and Fair Elections?

14. (C) MK Nepal emphasized the importance of holding Constituent Assembly elections by June, the timeframe set by the November 21 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. He worried about the Prime Minister's health, and argued that any delay in holding the elections would run the risk of something bad happening to the PM, throwing a huge hurdle into the process. MK Nepal also worried that the longer the country was in a transitional phase without an election, the longer it would take for effective economic development. He suggested that perhaps the Maoists wanted to delay the elections to give their cadre more of a chance to establish themselves as a

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legitimate political party ready to enter a democratic process. MK Nepal worried that if the election were delayed, Maoist atrocities would be further from the minds of the people, allowing Maoist popularity to grow and increasing their competitiveness vis-a-vis the CPN-UML. MK Nepal was not concerned about Maoist intimidation creating problems during the elections, stating that he believed that people would be brave enough to vote their conscience regardless of Maoist actions.

15. (C) In contrast, Deuba stressed that it would be very difficult to hold free and fair elections within the next five to six months due to continuing Maoist atrocities. Deuba suggested to the Ambassador that perhaps the elections should be put off until April or May 2008 to make sure that fear was drained from the countryside and the Maoists were serious about entering into a peaceful democratic process. Deuba admitted, however, that he did not have much support for such a delay from the other political parties in the SPA. Deuba believed that with the extra time before elections, the parties in the SPA could better integrate the Maoists into mainstream politics.

SPA Unity Unsure

16. (C) The Ambassador urged both to ensure the SPA remained united in the days to come, at least on the issues of a democratic process and the Maoists giving up their weapons and violence before entering into an interim government. MK Nepal and Deuba indicated weakly that such unity would likely remain, although each blamed the other's party of beginning to work with the Maoists. MK Nepal strongly denied a possible alliance between the CPN-UML and the Maoists, saying that it would be "impossible." He accused the NC and NC-D of planning to cooperate with the Maoists to gain seats in the upcoming Constituent Assembly elections from the CPN-UML. He stated that the NC needed to "change its own ways" in order to maintain SPA unity. Deuba said that it was important that the SPA take a strong stance against the Maoists, but that the Maoists had been "very clever" in turning the parties against one another. Deuba partially blamed the Prime

Minister for a breakdown in SPA unity because the PM continued to have private meetings with Maoist Supremo Prachanda to make important decisions (such as the finalization of the Interim Constitution) and then presented those decisions to the other SPA leaders to sign.

Interim Constitution Flawed

17. (C) Deuba told the Ambassador that he believed the Interim Constitution in its current form was flawed and needed to be amended before promulgation. He worried that the envisioned dual voting system created another method for Maoist intimidation. With a dual voting system, the Maoists could allow people to vote for a candidate from their own party (Deuba or MK Nepal, for instance) while still casting their second vote for the Maoists as a party, giving them more seats in the Constituent Assembly. However, he made it clear that the Prime Minister controlled the process and that if the PM asked for changes, Deuba would agree.

Comment

18. (C) Concern is rising among political party leaders that the Maoists are using the democratic process simply as a way to gain absolute power. Both Deuba and MK Nepal have begun "campaigning," each trying to undermine the other's claim to the post of Prime Minister if Koirala were to die soon. While restoration of law and order across the country and re-establishment of local governance is necessary, the current climate of suspicion between political parties and misgivings over the Interim Constitution suggest concrete action will be slow in coming. Continued SPA unity is questionable, although the three major parties are unlikely

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to enter into any sort of working relationship with the Maoists. All three fear that, if they entered into an alliance with the Maoists, the latter would swallow them whole.
MORIARTY